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## ABSTRACT

This chapter on positive behavior management is taken from a guide to designing, implementing, and evaluating instruction and services for students with disabilities. The chapter describes considerations in designing positive management programs to prevent inappropriate student behaviors, foster the development of student responsibility, and respond to behavior problems in a way that supports students and promotes their learning of appropriate social and classroom behavior. The chapter outlines the components of positive behavior management systems; the benefits of a positive approach to management versus punitive discipline; guiding principles and specific strategies to foster positive, responsible student behavior; and methods of implementing the strategies by school leaders. Appendices list resources for informal needs assessment for planning student support programs, classroom strategies for promoting positive student behavior, administrative strategies to promote positive behavior management, and 12 commercial programs/resources for social skills instruction. (Contains 25 references and a list of 20 additional resources.) (JDD)

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## Chapter 9

# Positive Behavior Management: Fostering Responsible Student Behavior

Lori Korinek

## INTRODUCTION

Behavior management in schools has been ranked as an educational concern at or near the top of the annual Gallup Polls of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools for the past 20 years. Dealing with behavior consumes a great deal of teachers' and administrators' time and energy. Despite the resources devoted to management, many school personnel are relying on traditional, punitive forms of discipline that are of questionable value to the students involved. Positive approaches that are responsive to student needs and yield more responsible, appropriate behavior should be the focus of management programs. In the context of the overall school climate, behavior management has a profound effect on students' attitudes toward themselves, school and learning, the adults in their environment and on their future behavior.

Administrators play a crucial role in developing and implementing behavior management programs. Unless leaders actively set priorities, focus staff, and provide support, resources, and professional development opportunities, even the most well-conceived programs will have limited success (Curwin & Mendler, 1988; De Bevoise, 1984; Jones, 1987). Administrators must engage in communication, problem solving, team building, morale building, and quality control, rather than relying on mandates and policy directives to effect change. The goal is to have faculty working together with clear goals, maximum involvement, careful planning, and close coordination of efforts. Administrators also set a tone that encourages teachers to speak openly about their problems and challenging student behaviors without being judged weak or incompetent. They build consensus from points of agreement, while recognizing and allowing for individual differences and the varying points of view, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about discipline that are bound to exist in any faculty. Visibility, willingness to confront and deal with difficult problems, active commitment to shared decision making, and treatment of all with dignity and respect are characteristics essential to an administrator in establishing a climate that supports positive behavior management.

This chapter describes considerations for administrators in designing positive management programs to prevent inappropriate student behaviors, foster the development of student responsibility, and respond to behavior problems in a way

that supports students and promotes their learning of appropriate social and classroom behavior. The chapter is organized around the following key questions:

- 1. What constitutes positive behavior management?**
- 2. What are guiding principles and specific strategies to foster positive, responsible student behavior?**
- 3. How do school leaders implement a more positive approach to management?**

## **1. WHAT CONSTITUTES POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT?**

According to Wayson and Lasley (1984), schools with effective, positive management systems are distinguished by "a sense of community marked by mutually agreed upon behavioral norms [that] surround students with examples of acceptable behaviors and provide subtle rewards and sanctions that encourage students to behave appropriately" (p. 419). Positive management is one element of a school climate characterized by positive teacher-student and peer relationships, fulfillment of students' personal and psychological needs, effective organization, effective instruction, and a variety of techniques that encourage student self-control (Jones & Jones, 1990). Administrators, teachers, and support staff consistently make clear to students that belonging, respect, service, and learning are valued in the school setting.

Positive behavior management also represents a decided departure from traditional concepts of discipline. The word discipline generally connotes a variety of punishments used in hopes of correcting behavioral problems (Rosell, 1986). Traditional discipline systems focus on external control of students and often punitive measures to decrease inappropriate behavior. Shame, ridicule, sarcasm, humiliation, dwelling on past behavior, and exclusion are frequently associated with such systems, which are self-defeating and nonproductive.

Positive behavior management, in contrast, is proactive, preventative, and designed to foster self-control and increase appropriate student behavior. Student problems are responded to with positive support rather than punishment. Instead of relying on power and punitive models of behavior control, schools with positive behavior management systems share decision making to maintain a school climate that promotes self-discipline. The ultimate responsibility for choosing the correct behavior rests with the student. The objective is to teach appropriate social and academic behavior and responsible decision making, rather than to punish undesirable behavior and leave the development of positive behavior to chance. Positive behavior management may initially involve more work; take longer to produce results; and force personnel to examine how they may be contributing to discipline

problems by failing to motivate, embarrassing students, and denying them choices or opportunities for expression. In the long run, however, positive management systems encourage better teaching and learning, decision making, and critical thinking as well as more appropriate behavior (Curwin & Mendler, 1988).

### Assumptions

Positive behavior management is based on the premise that students whose needs are being met and who feel safe, accepted, cared for, recognized, and involved in school engage in more appropriate behavior (Glasser, 1985; Grossman; 1990; Jones & Jones, 1990). Negative behavior is a result of individuals not having their needs met in the environment in which the misbehavior occurs or of not having the skills to respond appropriately to events in their environment. Understanding students' needs helps educators understand student behavior, be less defensive in the face of inappropriate conduct, and be more open to considering program adjustments that better meet students' needs and ensure success.

Many authors and theorists have enumerated basic student needs that must be met in order for students to behave in a positive, productive manner. Some of the most widely quoted include Glasser (1985), who focused on the needs to survive, belong and love, gain power, be free, and have fun. Similarly, Coopersmith (1967) considered a sense of significance (being valued by others), competence (being able to perform a socially valued task), and power (being able to control one's environment) as essential for self-esteem. Maslow's (1975) proposed hierarchy of needs from the most basic physiological needs, to safety and security, to belonging and affection, to self-respect, to self-actualization also underscored the idea that success and achievement are possible only after more basic needs have been met.

Needs-based theories of behavior relate directly to many of the purported causes of school discipline problems, including student boredom, powerlessness, unclear limits, a lack of acceptable outlets for feelings, a reduced sense of security and stability, and attacks on student dignity (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Educators can identify student needs by examining theories such as those already mentioned and the associated research, asking students what they need to feel more comfortable and better able to learn, and systematically observing students in various situations throughout the school day (Jones & Jones, 1990).

In addition to knowing their students and the students' needs, educators must know themselves as people with beliefs and values, strengths and weaknesses, and biases that influence how they deal with students and their behavior. As is true with students, different cultural backgrounds, value systems, and personalities can greatly affect how educators perceive and respond to behaviors and situations in their environment (Grossman, 1990). For example, emphasis on tolerance or consideration, cooperation or competition, and expression or silent acceptance in a teacher's background may influence the teacher's perceptions of what constitutes

appropriate or inappropriate behavior and when and what intervention is necessary. Similarly, a teacher's values (e.g., the rights of the individual vs. the rights of the group, respect for a teacher as an authority figure vs. liking for a teacher as an approachable mentor, promptness vs. quality of assignments) will influence the degree to which the teacher considers a student's behavior problematic. Teachers and administrators need to be aware of their values and how their backgrounds, cultures, and personalities influence perceptions of and responses to student behavior. Frank discussions of problem behaviors and preferred interventions among school personnel provide a forum for exploring values, perspectives, and beliefs about behavior management. Interviewing students to find out how they perceive class rules, procedures, social patterns, and classroom management can also yield valuable information for the reflective teacher.

Another assumption related to positive behavior management is that school personnel are willing to problem solve collaboratively and accept responsibility for teaching students more acceptable attitudes and behaviors, rather than seeking to remove disruptive students from their educational program. As a professional associated with one of the Comer schools stated:

*Our assumption is that virtually any human problem can be solved if people are willing to meet on a consistent basis, explore and develop solutions -- without placing blame -- develop interventions, and expend the energy necessary to implement and monitor them. Hard work, along with passionate belief in human growth and potential, must characterize each school. No short, sweet, easy approach will work. (Smith & Joyner, 1991, p. 9)*

### **Benefits of a Positive Approach to Management versus Punitive Discipline**

Punitive discipline severely limits the range of options pursued by school personnel in response to student behaviors. Techniques such as suspension and expulsion put students at greater risk for truancy and dropping out, resulting in missed learning opportunities, which add to students' problems and expose unsupervised students to the dangers of the streets (Grice, 1986). Not only out-of-school suspension, but also many in-school suspension programs, home-bound instruction, shortened school days, and ignored truancy serve to exclude students from their primary school environment (Grosenick & Huntze, 1984). In addition, some of these disciplinary practices may violate legal provisions of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 101-476), such as the right to a free, appropriate public education, the right to prescribed procedures prior to change of placement, and the right to an education in the least restrictive environment (Rose, 1988).

Punitive techniques have also been shown to have only limited and short-term effects on inappropriate behavior (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). In addition, punishment generates anxiety, hostility, resentment, and a decrease in positive motivation among

individuals who are punished (Kerr & Nelson, 1989; Walker & Shea, 1991). Thus, it makes sense to implement a more effective mode of behavioral intervention to prevent the negative consequences of punitive discipline.

A more positive approach to behavior management holds great promise for altering negative behaviors that consume so much of teachers', administrators', and students' time and energy -- for "turning around" deteriorating situations in the schools. There are numerous and compelling reasons to take a more positive approach to behavior management. Documented benefits include the following:

- Less student isolation, alienation, hostility, and frustration.
- Fewer suspensions and expulsions.
- Less violent behavior.
- Less disruptive classroom behavior.
- Less vandalism.
- Improved morale among students and staff.
- Improved attendance.
- Greater student achievement.
- Development of students' prosocial skills and responsible behavior.

As Green and Uroff (1989) summarized, typical approaches to behavior management "won't help at-risk students by merely stepping up programs that have failed them in the past -- by creating tougher academic standards, a longer school day and year, and more homework. Instead we must focus our efforts on the students themselves" (p. 81). Positive behavior management is an attempt to maintain this focus.

### **Hallmarks of Positive Behavior Management Systems**

A review of the literature reveals several essential characteristics of positive behavior management systems that account for their effectiveness. Individual school programs will vary in how they accomplish these elements, but all are critical to successful management.

Programs in a comprehensive positive behavior management system are based on and responsive to documented and perceived needs of students.

Students who are at risk for failure, as well as those labeled as having emotional/behavioral disabilities, demonstrate a continuum of challenging behaviors ranging from mild to serious acting out and aggression. Because there is a need to change behavior at all points along this continuum and the needs of students are diverse, a variety of programs and alternatives (discussed later in this chapter) must be made available. No single approach will work with all students. The goal is to respond to student behavior in a way that will result in learning on the student's part while maintaining an undisturbed school climate for the rest of the students. Programming must be responsive to students' needs and interests. Curricula must

have personal relevance and utility for students, helping them to negotiate the challenges they face in their world. Academic success is necessarily a focus, but the curriculum must also promote security, caring, responsibility, and prosocial skills.

Many of the resources listed in Appendix A include checklists that teachers and specialists can use to evaluate their personal instructional and management styles and to determine how well their classroom environment matches the needs of their students. The remaining resources facilitate assessment of how well school curricula meet student needs that go beyond traditional academic subjects.

Leadership fosters and sustains positive school values and management.

Instructional leaders in positive management systems articulate, promote, and protect positive beliefs and actions that are congruent with the school's value system. Administrators help teachers experience professional autonomy and enable students to value learning. They bring out the best in their staff and the students and help them to believe in themselves. This calls for leaders to collaborate with others in the school community by discussing, informing, persuading, team building, and building consensus and by sharing power, decision making, and recognition. It also calls for the realization that principals and supervisors cannot solve problems for people; rather they need to facilitate groups in solving their own problems and secure resources to support them in these efforts.

Students, parents, teachers, and support staff are actively involved in goal setting and decision making and feel a commitment to the resulting policies, goals, and decisions.

Involvement to identify organizational and student needs and problems and to suggest solutions to these problems should be broad based and long term. There should be mechanisms (e.g., workgroups, representation on key committees, community nights) for ongoing communication with and input from parents, teachers, and other staff in shaping the overarching school policies and goals. Students' input is also crucial for successful program development. They must be made to feel that adults are working with them in setting goals and action plans, not doing things to them.

Policies and goals should be general enough to be flexible, yet concrete enough to be clearly understood by all. Goals must also be diffused and promoted among the various constituencies or stakeholder groups. Slogans or aphorisms (e.g., "Success for All" or "Together We Will Achieve") are frequently used to exemplify and promote the overriding values and goals of a school setting (Wayson & Lasley, 1984).

Principles and rules of conduct are clearly delineated.

Principles define the general attitudes and expectations for long-term behavioral growth (e.g., "Be responsible," "Care for others"). They provide an understanding of

the value of rules. Rules are more specific, are enforceable, and follow logically from principles (e.g., "Come to class prepared," "Avoid physical contact with peers") (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Schools need to plan specific ways in which administrators, teachers, and support staff will instruct and enable students to meet the rules and expectations set forth. Poorly developed and enforced rules lead to discipline problems. Rules that are (a) carefully developed with broad-based input to engage broad-based commitment, (b) clearly and positively stated, (c) systematically taught and practiced, and (d) reviewed and revised as needed are most effective in preventing discipline problems, decreasing the severity of management problems, and handling conflicts in a fair manner. Student involvement in establishing rules for the classroom and school, as well as consequences for breaking rules, can greatly enhance students' sense of efficacy and belonging to the school and their commitment to the standards set forth.

Rules should tell students what to do, instead of merely stating limitations on behavior (e.g., "Follow teacher requests" instead of "Do not disobey"; "Speak positively to others" instead of "No name calling"; "Walk in the halls" instead of "No running"). In addition, rules should be few in number so they will be easy to remember. They should represent essential expectations that shape and guide the development of informal rules at the classroom level. Expectations must be high, but not unreasonable. Evening workshops for parents, classroom time and activities for students, and workshops for teaching staff and school monitors are ways to share understandings of school rules and expectations with the school community.

Respect and caring are modeled for students by school personnel at every level.

Students are treated with respect and dignity by administrators, teachers, specialists, and support personnel. They are talked with and about in a manner that communicates respect and are made to feel an integral part of their school. Stress is placed on the development of autonomy and individual responsibility by students. Problem behaviors are addressed through approaches that emphasize the use of nonaversive techniques and support for students in changing their behaviors. Students are shown how to relate to their peers and adults through the example of how they are treated by school personnel.

Students feel a sense of belonging, ownership, and caring for their school.

There is common recognition that every individual is important and has something to contribute. The school environment and behavior management systems should promote success, encourage teachers and students to feel good about themselves, and maintain a culture conducive to learning.

## **2. WHAT ARE GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO FOSTER POSITIVE, RESPONSIBLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR?**

Because student needs and school situations vary, no one program can address all needs and settings adequately. The following strategies represent components of approaches that have been implemented in a variety of schools at different levels with documented success. The administrator must carefully assess the existing behavior management system and make alterations and/or additions based on the needs of students and the nature of current programs. Multidimensional, positive, and individualized systems are the most likely to influence student behaviors. Combinations of the following strategies or approaches to best suit student populations in particular settings are strongly recommended.

### Clearly articulate school values and clarify expectations.

All groups involved with the school should receive printed copies of policy manuals explaining school philosophy, values, rules, and regulations that have been developed by school and community representatives. Students should be informed of their personal rights, public responsibilities, and the consequences for inappropriate behavior. All students -- especially those who are new to the school -- should receive sufficient, intensive orientation at the beginning of the school year or when they transfer into the school. Orientation should delineate resources (e.g., peer support groups, tutoring programs, mentorships, enrichment activities) available to assist and support them. These services should be coordinated with the school's traditional counseling services.

### Establish personal relationships with students.

Every student should have at least one staff member, teacher, or administrator assigned to or selected by the student who acts as his or her mentor, guide, and advisor. The objective is to provide ready access to a concerned adult who can assist the student in solving academic and personal problems. This person helps students -- especially those with chronic discipline problems -- to secure services such as tutoring, support groups, or counseling. He or she also encourages students to participate in extracurricular activities and to develop positive relationships with other students. Some schools allow students to remain with their advisors/mentors for longer than one school year, because many students who are at risk and many from low-income families take longer to become comfortable with and motivated by adults associated with the school setting. Ongoing relationships with trusted and caring adults add stability to students' lives that have often been marked by a high degree of instability and separation.

### Increase student involvement and leadership.

As previously mentioned, students can play an important role in developing classroom and school rules and consequences. Students may also be involved in

decision making through mechanisms such as student leadership programs, wherein groups of students meet with teachers and administrators to work on problems such as absenteeism, truancy, vandalism, and low achievement. Student groups can launch campaigns (e.g., "Keep our school safe") using assembly programs, daily announcements, posters, and slide shows to stimulate participation. Student involvement can also be promoted by broadening co-curricular programs to allow and encourage all students to participate. Many schools have increased the number of team sports and extracurricular activities they offer. Schoolwide themes or units (e.g., the Olympics, mysteries, cultural heritage) are also used to focus student activities and promote a sense of unity throughout the school. Increased student participation in school life can be stimulated by enrichment activities such as symposia, all-cultures festivals, exchange programs, field trips, assemblies, or a Model Congress or United Nations.

Villa and Thousand (1990) have described additional ways that students can be involved in the school community. Students may serve as members of instructional teams through cooperative learning activities and/or as members of teacher-student learning teams. Peer tutoring programs and cross-age teaching, in which older students work with younger students or classes are combined for certain aspects of instruction, are additional ways to involve students in meaningful school activities. Students may assist in determining accommodations for classmates with special needs or provide feedback to teachers regarding the effectiveness of instruction. Peer support networks to establish "buddies" in mainstream classes can assist students who may be feeling isolated.

Students may also become more involved in planning their own learning experiences. An educational planning strategy designed to increase students' control and active participation in their own learning has been developed by VanReusen, Bos, Schumaker, and Deshler (1987). Students learn to analyze their strengths, weaknesses, goals, and choices for learning and to share this information with teachers, administrators, and related service personnel during planning conferences. This allows them input into their own instructional programming. Student interest inventories, learning style preference checklists, and learning profiles, such as those suggested by Mercer and Mercer (1989), Wiener (1986), and Wood (1984) (see Appendix A), can easily be adapted to this process by involving the student in responding and planning based on the identified personal and classroom variables assessed.

#### Showcase student talents, accomplishments, and improvements.

Schools can prominently display students' work from a variety of classes and projects. Displays of photos, slides, and student products are one way to highlight strengths and talents. These exhibits may be exchanged among schools. Regularly scheduled student assemblies can also be used to celebrate students' successes and

talents in writing, poetry, song, and dance. Some schools also showcase students' artistic talents and expression by allowing them to paint or decorate school hallways or other areas of the building.

Many schools have set up reward systems for recognizing students who exemplify desired and improved behavior. These systems may include commendation letters from teachers and administrators to students and their parents; reinforcement periods with music, group games, and food; special field trips; school privileges; and prizes furnished by community businesses (e.g., movie tickets, dinners, merchandise).

Provide access to support groups for various needs.

Teachers and administrators can work with community agencies such as social services and community mental health services to develop on-campus support groups for students with alcohol and substance abuse problems, children of alcoholic parents, teenage parents, students who have been physically or sexually abused, and others who could benefit from peer support groups. The nature of these groups depends on the needs of students in any given setting.

At the classroom level, regularly scheduled weekly or semiweekly classroom meetings can serve as a forum for student expression, problem solving, and support (Glasser, 1969). Students can bring up issues that arise in the classroom (e.g., cheating, violence in the school, class cohesiveness, distractions, class rules) or more open-ended topics (e.g., prejudice, environmental issues, peer pressure) that promote higher-level thinking, exchange of ideas, and understanding. Meetings may also be focused on program and curricular decisions (e.g., homework, unit topics, grading practices) to provide a vehicle for student input. A procedure for setting goals, planning actions, and determining support responsibilities is also a part of the meeting. Ground rules for conducting the meeting (e.g., "One person speaks at a time"; "Everyone gets a chance to express his or her opinion"; "No put-downs or name calling") should also be agreed on.

Provide expedited access to academic, advising, and counseling services.

Conferences should be used extensively as a preventative strategy. In meetings with advisors, school psychologists, counselors, administrators, parents, or teachers, rules and expectations should be clarified and student concerns identified. Different levels of available services can also be delineated. In these sessions, students can describe potential problems with teachers, peers, or classes and are assisted in problem solving while the situations are still manageable. They learn to anticipate difficulties and use available resources before problems escalate to crisis levels.

Provide instruction in coping skills.

Silverman, Zigmond, and Sansone (1981) called these coping skills "school survival skills" and included behavioral self-control, teacher-pleasing behaviors (e.g.,

eye contact, responding, following rules), and study skills (e.g., listening, organization, note taking, test taking) as critical curricula for students lacking these skills or those who are at risk for school failure. Teachers or specialists can also help students identify emotions associated with negative behaviors and loss of control; recognize and monitor these feelings of anger, frustration, depression, or fear; and develop a plan to prevent loss of control and to cope more constructively. Classes in success and self-esteem, communication, psychology, critical issues confronting students in their daily lives, learning strategies, and social skills development have also proved beneficial to many students when the skills learned in class are integrated, practiced, and reinforced throughout the school. Resources to assist needs assessment in planning student support programs are listed in Appendix A.

Design staff development activities to promote more positive approaches to behavior management.

Teacher training in group processes, conflict resolution, learning styles, communication skills, effective discipline, problem-solving skills, clarifying expectations and consequences, stating rules, and developing behavioral contracts has been found to be very helpful in increasing teachers' confidence and effectiveness in dealing with difficult behaviors and promoting more responsible behavior in their classrooms. These efforts require ongoing support, continued commitment, followup, and encouragement from school administrators, as do most of the other strategies in this chapter. One-day or short-term inservice programs will not lead to lasting behavioral change on the part of students or teachers.

Use additional personnel or redefine roles of existing personnel to facilitate day-to-day implementation of positive behavior management.

Administrators must ensure the availability of sufficient staff to implement programs effectively. Some schools enlist the services of school-community aides to monitor the halls and school building; identify trespassers; and head off fights, vandalism, and other negative acts. Even more important, these aides are dedicated to establishing positive rapport with students and serve as a source of support to them.

For example, in schools that have adopted the Positive Alternatives to School Suspension (PASS) program, a PASS coordinator is hired or appointed to provide supportive services to students -- especially those at risk -- and to redirect student activities toward more positive behavior. This is accomplished through counseling, identification of academic difficulties, and consequences that isolate highly disruptive students but do not put them at higher risk with out-of-school suspension. Other coordinator responsibilities include arranging parent-faculty conferences and classroom visits to assist teachers or to provide direct services to students; monitoring classwork of students removed from class to the PASS resource room; networking with resource specialists; and linking faculty with multicultural/multiethnic resources <sup>a+</sup>

the district level. The coordinator also conducts parent meetings regarding the PASS system; makes presentations to groups; updates parents on student progress by telephone; coordinates guest speakers for staff development; works with community agencies to develop resources and services outside of school (e.g., parent workshops); and links parents with resources. The coordinated services that comprise the PASS program have been documented as effective in reducing negative student behavior and promoting an atmosphere more conducive to learning for all students (Grice, 1986).

Make increased use of collaborative structures such as teacher or multidisciplinary assistance teams, consultation, and cooperative teaching to address behavior problems and target positive interventions.

Many of the recently developed collaborative alternatives to pull-out service delivery for students needing special education can also be used to support students with chronic behavioral or academic problems (Laycock, Gable, & Korinek, 1991). In these approaches, pairs or groups of individuals with diverse backgrounds combine their expertise to identify problems and needs, brainstorm interventions, develop action plans for improving student performance, and follow up on outcomes of all interventions. Collaborative approaches also provide support and informal staff development for the adult participants involved in the process.

Provide an alternative class for students who are failing.

Students who are failing are often disruptive. Some schools (e.g., Grice, 1986; Smith & Joyner, 1991) have established alternative classes where work can be completed under the supervision of specially selected teachers. Instruction in this classroom may also be designed to help students develop more effective coping skills and more positive ways of viewing themselves as learners. These classes are short-term alternatives for students to help them get back on track. They are not intended to be an ongoing or long-term form of special education that removes students from mainstream classes.

Ensure that classroom-based behavior management techniques emphasize positive, proactive, learner-based techniques for shaping appropriate behavior.

Some of these techniques may include the following:

- Class rules that are positively worded, few in number, realistic, clear, and promote behaviors central to a positive learning environment.
- Weekly progress reports from general and special education teachers that are charted and discussed with students.

- Individualized behavioral contracts that clearly delineate expected behaviors and consequences. Contracts should be negotiated with the students and commitments to the contract provisions obtained prior to implementation. Administrators can help to ensure that resources are available to support contingencies arranged in the contracts.
- Reliance on natural consequences logically connected to the behavior, rather than artificial consequences (e.g., academic work used as punishment or removal of students from the classroom). Expulsion and suspension cannot be applied to students in special education without careful adherence to due process regulations.
- Point, level, or token systems heavily weighted toward students earning points and privileges for engaging in appropriate behavior rather than losing points for misbehavior. Students who lose all their points early in the day or have little chance of earning the designated reinforcers quickly opt out of the system and continue or escalate their resistant behaviors.

Additional suggestions for promoting positive behavior are listed in Appendix B.

### **3. HOW DO SCHOOL LEADERS IMPLEMENT A MORE POSITIVE APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT?**

The following best practices based on successful programs, recommendations from Phi Delta Kappan's Commission on Discipline (Wayson & Lasley, 1984), and a review of other current literature are offered to administrators to facilitate their efforts in implementing a more positive management system in their schools. Appendix C lists more specific suggestions for administrative actions that help promote more positive behavior management.

#### Establish a broad-based, collaborative planning group.

Current literature in program development and systems change stresses the importance of involving all parties who will be affected by the change in the design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of any new program or initiative. The instructional leader organizes and facilitates this group in developing a specific plan for implementing more positive behavior management strategies on the school level. The plan identifies goals of the program, specific steps needed to implement the approach, roles and responsibilities of participants, required resources, and evaluation of effectiveness. Subsequent department- or grade-level teams may be mobilized to help with implementation on the classroom level.

Reach consensus regarding the underlying program philosophy and mission.

Philosophical agreement must be reached on the basic purpose of the program and the assumptions under which it will operate (e.g., student support/education rather than punishment; prevention rather than just reaction to behavior). The philosophy of positive behavior management serves as the foundation upon which all other decisions regarding the program are made.

Conduct a needs analysis to establish baseline data regarding the attitudes, perceptions, practices, and outcomes related to the current system.

The most accurate picture of what is happening in a particular setting can be obtained by collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources such as students, parents, teachers, support staff, and other relevant parties regarding various facets of the overall program most directly related to behavior management efforts. These data may include but are not limited to the following:

- Parent, student, and teacher perceptions, attitudes, and satisfaction with current school programs, behavior management practices, and innovations being considered.
- Student grades.
- Attendance.
- Dropout and grade retention rates.
- Referrals to the office.
- Occurrences of in- and out-of-school suspensions and breakdown according to reason and race/ethnicity (to determine whether certain groups of students are being treated differentially).
- Incidents of vandalism and aggression.
- Behavior problems occurring in class as opposed to outside of class.
- Punishments applied to students and rate of repeated offenses.
- Videotaped or direct observation of classroom, hallway, cafeteria, and playground behavior.
- Numbers of students participating in extra- and co-curricular activities.
- Numbers of students participating in counseling, support groups, tutoring programs, and other student support activities.
- Numbers of parents involved in school programs.

Specific skill areas and behaviors and social skills of students needing support can be assessed using resources such as those listed in Appendixes A and D.

Build on existing structures or program elements that support positive behavior management.

Certain classroom or school wide programs that support students in developing responsible behavior (such as those mentioned previously) may already be operative.

The administrator can facilitate identification of these programs or techniques and seek out key personnel to spread the word, serve as models, provide the foundation, and extend these programs to support additional students and teachers. Further innovations should build on existing structures that have already proved successful and are supported by staff.

Combine positive behavior management alternatives to enhance service delivery.

The combination of several complementary alternatives is likely to be most effective in meeting a range of student needs and staff styles (e.g., student-to-student support in the form of peer tutoring or support groups combined with adult-to-student support alternatives such as mentorships or counseling services). In addition, the integral link between positive behavior management and effective instruction that motivates students and enables them to be successful learners (covered in other chapters in this manual) cannot be ignored.

Ensure that all personnel have the necessary skills or receive training to participate effectively in positive management programs.

All personnel, from administrators responsible for program leadership to teachers to paraprofessionals and other support staff, must be versed in the philosophy and techniques identified as essential to positive behavior management. Untrained personnel can seriously undermine efforts to establish a more positive approach. Administrator participation in training, rather than mandating that teachers and staff participate without the support of the administrator, sends a powerful message regarding the importance of the staff development effort. As previously mentioned, training must be of sufficient intensity and duration, with followup provided if actual changes in practice are expected to take place.

Adapt strategies and programs to fit local needs and resources.

Model programs that have been implemented in other schools generally require modification to meet unique local needs. The characteristics of the students, staff, and setting will influence the selection and modification of management structures, and selected structures are likely to stimulate new ideas and strategies as they are implemented.

Make ongoing evaluation the basis for decisions and program modifications.

By collecting and using information similar to that suggested for needs assessment throughout the design and implementation of the program, the planning team will be able to validate the selection of strategies, work out problems, and promote the program with school personnel and other members of the school community.

Recognize that a more positive approach to behavior management may represent a change for school personnel that requires ongoing staff development and support.

Change is a process that takes time. Resistance, disagreements, and periods of uncertainty are a normal part of this process. People require training in the new techniques, information, resources, support, and some assertive pressure from their leaders to make meaningful and lasting changes. Working with the planning team, the school administrator must provide the leadership and support over an extended period of time to effect this change.

## SUMMARY

This chapter presented ideas and suggestions regarding the development and maintenance of more positive behavior management programs in schools. Administrators have a central leadership role in the movement away from punitive, exclusive forms of discipline toward more supportive, instructional, and preventative behavior management programs. Given the ever-increasing numbers of students at risk for school failure and the escalation of school violence and other disruptive acts, it is imperative that instructional leaders take positive action to reverse these disturbing trends. Many promising alternatives exist for those committed to fostering positive student behavior by being more directly supportive to students.

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## **APPENDIX A**

**Resources for Informal Needs Assessment for  
Planning Student Support Programs**

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## Resources for Informal Needs Assessment for Planning Student Support Programs

### Source Areas Addressed

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Curwin & Mendlar (1988)	Behavior management inventory, school discipline survey.
Englert (1984)	Classroom management, instructional presentation, classroom organization.
Hoover (1988)	Study skills -- Reading rate, listening, notetaking/outlining, report writing, oral presentations, graphic aids, test taking, library usage, reference/dictionary usage, time management, self-management.
Mercer & Mercer (1989)	Learner expectancies, teacher expectancies, peer expectancies, parental expectancies, physical properties, instructional arrangements, instructional techniques, materials, learning style preferences, student responses, teacher feedback.
Robinson, Braxdale, & Colson (1985)	Listening, self-management, record keeping, reading content for comprehension, test taking, interactive learning.
Salend & Viglianti (1982)	Classroom variables analysis -- instructional materials and support personnel, presentation of subject matter, learner response variables, classroom management, and physical design.
Silverman, Zigmond, & Sansone (1981)	Study skills including using the text, note taking, homework, test taking, listening, bringing materials, and following directions; academics including reading, mathematics, and writing; behaviors including punctuality, staying in seat, attending, and peer interactions.
Wiener (1986)	Classroom demands and evaluation procedures, questions on essay/project/report writing, test preparation and test taking, note taking, and gaining information from text.
<u>SAALE</u> Wood (1988)	Social/emotional/behavioral environment, physical environment, instructional environment including teaching, media, content, and evaluation techniques.
<u>TIES</u> Ysseldyke & Christenson (1987)	Classroom environment, teacher expectations, cognitive emphasis, motivational strategies, relevant practice, academic engaged time, feedback, adaptive instruction, progress evaluation, instructional planning, and student understanding.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Classroom Strategies for Promoting Positive Student Behavior**

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## **Classroom Strategies for Promoting Positive Student Behavior**

1. "Catch kids being good" -- reward desirable behavior rather than focusing attention on inappropriate behaviors and continual reminders.
2. Vary reinforcers -- social, activity, and tangible.
3. Keep students interested, involved, and successful on a daily basis.
4. Incorporate physical activity into lessons or alternate active and quiet lessons.
5. Structure student choices related to various aspects of their school day (e.g., order of assignments, response modes, reading selections, study partners, research topics).
6. Model organization and respect in interactions with students.
7. Design activity, media, or special interest centers.
8. Redirect students who are off task rather than reprimanding students and thereby focusing attention on off-task behavior.
9. Ignore irritating behavior to the extent possible. Instead, encourage a student who is demonstrating the desired behavior within earshot of the student demonstrating off-task behavior.
10. Use proximity control. Move about the classroom supervising student work, assisting students before they get frustrated, and encouraging students to remain on task with your presence.
11. Use signals that do not disrupt the entire class or embarrass students (e.g., thumbs up/thumbs down, colored note cards) to cue appropriate behavior.
12. Have an "I need help" signal that students can post at their desks during seatwork when they need teacher assistance to proceed and individualized "turn to" activities (e.g., journal writing, math facts, spelling practice) that the student can turn to while waiting for help.
13. Use peer helpers and models in the classroom.
14. Make study carrels available to students who need a quiet setting to complete their work or calm down from an upsetting event.

15. Use a kitchen timer to set specific work periods, and clarify consequences for students engaging in appropriate behavior during these periods. The timer can also be set at random intervals. Students who are on-task when the timer rings may be rewarded.
16. Provide checklists for self-evaluation of assignments, behaviors, tasks, and materials to promote student independence and self-evaluation.
17. Have students count/monitor their own target behaviors. Identify with the student the behaviors needing to be changed and model how to keep track of these behaviors. Gradually have the student assume responsibility for counting and charting his or her behavior. Discuss progress regularly.
18. Show an interest in and attend to student activities outside the classroom.
19. Have lunch with individual students to share personal interests, or arrange times to meet one-to-one with students.
20. Use a suggestion box and encourage students to write their ideas for making the classroom a better place in which to learn.
21. Use a compliment box and encourage students to notice appropriate behaviors and write down positive comments about their peers.
22. Announce or post the daily schedule so that students can be prepared. Alert students to changes in the schedule in advance, if possible.
23. Always have an alternate activity planned for those times that a lesson or activity is going poorly (marked by student disruption and lack of interest). Be flexible in restructuring these activities or postponing them until another time.
24. Use role playing to help students practice appropriate responses to verbal or physical attacks, frustrating situations, and peer pressure.
25. Refer to the chapter text for strategies involving classroom meetings, contracts, rules, and point systems.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Administrative Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior Management**

## **Administrative Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior Management**

1. Recognize that faculty members have a variety of values and use multiple strategies to manage behavior. Do not force teachers to use consequences that do not fit their personalities or teaching situations.
2. Help teachers identify their strengths so they can build upon these strengths in making improvements.
3. Organize work groups or task forces on the various causes of in-school misbehavior. Each group comprises teachers, parents, students, and administrators and is charged with developing a specific plan of action in response to a specific cause or causes. The plan is tailored to the school (i.e. who will do exactly what and when and how it will be evaluated).
4. Establish support groups for teacher discussion of discipline and challenging behaviors and focus on adapting practical strategies. Give credit for participation as you would for other committee assignments.
5. Be visible in the halls, cafeteria, and classrooms and at the bus stop. Frequently check with staff to see how programs are progressing.
6. Clarify the administrator's role when students break a rule (i.e., what will be done when a student is sent to the office). Elicit a plan of action from the referred student.
7. Help staff differentiate motivation from discipline problems. Coach them in developing motivational skills and improving instruction. Give examples in concrete terms.
8. Give teachers the freedom and security to make mistakes.
9. Facilitate the development of school wide contracts with consequences (not punishments) that are clear, natural, logical, and instructive and provide a range of alternatives that address the behavior but preserve student dignity.
10. Ensure that students are tested on school rules that have been developed with input from and agreement by all groups within the school.
11. Help teachers share effective consequences (i.e., what behaviors, what consequences, when used, with whom). Publish specific suggestions.

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*Based on Curwin and Mendler (1988) and other sources listed in references.*

12. Model effective implementation of consequences. Do not lecture, scold, moralize, accept excuses, or make a public display of students or teachers.
13. Continually strive to involve parents and families. Keep them informed through meetings, special events, and publications. Elicit their input and solutions to problems.
14. Be there for faculty to actively listen and try to support them. Acknowledge that you do not know how to solve all problems but will work with your faculty to problem solve.
15. Allow teachers freedom in dealing creatively with chronic problems as long as they use nonpunitive measures and inform you in advance.
16. Encourage all teachers to discuss their specific management plans with you.
17. Encourage experimentation, innovation, and curriculum modification to meet student needs.
18. Reward faculty efforts to be more positive in their management and instruction with recognition, support, and other resources at your disposal.
19. Participate in training related to positive behavior management to convey the importance of the initiative and your support.
20. Seek support from other administrators who have been successful in their efforts to promote positive behavior management in other settings.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Commercial Programs/Resources for Social Skills Instruction**

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## **Commercial Programs/Resources for Social Skills Instruction**

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